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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies gave significant reporting September 3 to former Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau Director Yeh Sheng-mao, who admitted Tuesday that twice he had informed or handed over documents from the Egmont Group to former President Chen Shui-bian concerning a probe into Chen's overseas bank accounts. News coverage also focused on President Ma Ying-jeou's diplomatic truce policy and Taiwan's UN bid. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" criticized President Ma's "unfathomable" national defense policy and concluded that actual military strength is far more important than a goodwill gesture, if both sides of the Taiwan Strait are to move towards peace. An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" discussed the U.S. presidential campaigns and said the Taiwan issue has not only been marginalized in Washington's foreign policy establishment but has also not received much attention in both the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates' campaigns so far. The editorial urged both the KMT and the DPP to work harder and explore ways to make the new U.S. administration achieve policy that are also in Taiwan's interest. End summary.

A) "Actual Strength Is Far More Important Than Goodwill"

The mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] editorialized (9/3):

"Having been in office for a hundred days, Ma Ying-jeou's national defense policy still remains in a thick fog and unfathomable. Ma hopes to achieve a truce between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, but then he said truce requires willingness from both sides and that Taiwan will have to return immediately to a proactive state of being ready to go to war if China shows no intention of [keeping a] truce. ... It is a well-acknowledged fact that there is a big gap between Taiwan's military strength and that of China's. The United States' white paper on the military strengths of both sides of the Taiwan Strait and Taiwan's Han Guang military exercises have all well indicated that Taiwan will collapse at the first blow under full attacks launched by China. Under such circumstances, Taiwan's unilateral advocacy of stopping war, [seeking a] truce and its self-limitations on armament will not only be an unwise move but also show some sense of capitulationism.

"It takes more than a goodwill gesture for both sides of the Taiwan Strait to move towards peace. What is required is actual strength. If Taiwan lacks the deterrent weapons that are sufficient enough to threaten essential areas in China, it will, under in the penumbra of the 1000 missiles deployed by China, either surrender to Beijing or seek to take advantage of having the United States help us build up our military strength and enjoy U.S. protection for free. Washington's recent moves in forcing Taiwan to buy weapons were akin to telling Taiwan clearly that it should abandon the fond dream of a free lunch. ..."

B) "U.S. Presidential Poll and Taiwan's Hopes"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation:

20,000] editorialized (9/3):

"... Naturally, both the governing Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) government and the opposition Democratic Progressive Party have been working to build links with key foreign policy advisers in each camp by attending each convention. Moreover, President Ma Ying-jeou himself held telephone conversations with figures from each camp during last month's transit stops through Los Angeles and San Francisco, while DPP Chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen will refresh her bipartisan contacts during her visit to Washington this week. Since Taiwan has been relatively marginalized in the Washington foreign policy establishment in the wake of the rise in the military, economic and diplomatic clout of the People's Republic of China, such direct contacts are vital opportunities to clarify the likely international policy directions of the new U.S. administration on matters of concern to Taiwan, including global climatic change, world and regional peace and security, fair global trade and the promotion of democracy and freedom.

"Since the campaign is centering on domestic issues such as economic rejuvenation and the main item on the foreign policy agenda is how to deal with Bush's illegal war in Iraq, neither Obama or McCain have devoted much public attention to discussing new concrete substantive initiatives in future relations between the U.S. and the PRC besides expressing support for the Taiwan Relations Act and the overall thrust of the U.S. consensus "engagement" policy that aims to incorporate the Chinese Communist Party-ruled PRC into the world community as a 'responsible stakeholder.' ... Since it is open to question whether Obama or McCain will challenge Bush's pattern of high-level 'dialogue' with the PRC leadership, it is evident that Taiwan faces an uphill task in rebuilding positive ties with the new occupants of the White House. Representatives of both the governing KMT and the opposition DPP will explore in future months how Taiwan

can assist the new U.S. administration achieve policy goals that are also in our interest, such as actively joining the fight against global warming and getting out of the Iraqi morass.

"In addition, we believe that the DPP, as Taiwan's grassroots democratic party, should also urge both presidential camps to reaffirm the importance of Taiwan's vibrant democracy and to return to the position adopted by former U.S. president Bill Clinton on February 24, 2000, just before the March 2004 Taiwan presidential election and dropped by Bush, that the issues between Beijing and Taiwan 'must be resolved peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan.' Such a reaffirmation is crucial to ensure that the new U.S. administration does not follow Bush's practice of acting as a willing intermediary for PRC pressure on Taiwan's democracy and autonomy and to brake any moves by the KMT government to unilaterally relinquish Taiwan's sovereignty to Beijing without the explicit assent of the 23 million Taiwan people."

WANG